

Smart Inclusion

What? The integration of interactive white boards (SMART Boards) with assistive technology for use during group instruction in classroom settings.

Why? To increase participation and achievement for all students including those with significant disabilities; to position ALL students to take advantage of emerging educational technologies in inclusive learning environments.

How? By using SMART Boards and assistive technology to facilitate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) so that learning environments, opportunities and activities are accessible by diverse groups of learners; Understanding how the Participation Model can extend UDL and DI so that the learning and participation of students with the most significant learning challenges are increased and enhanced.

Why add Smart Inclusion to the teacher's tool box? Pilot work done last year (2008-2009) by the Speech-Language team at the Upper Canada District School Board suggests the following:

- Teachers in "smart classrooms" reported that all students were highly engaged in classroom activities to a greater degree compared to the previous year's cohort. "Engagement" was defined by teachers as "attentive, interested in activities, not disruptive, excited about learning".
- Special needs students participated with peers in small and large group classroom activities to a greater degree compared to their participation rates in the previous year.
- Teachers reported that they were doing "more teaching and less behaviour management" with the entire class. Students with serious behavioural challenges were reported to be less disruptive compared to the previous year.
- Teachers reported that special needs students were meeting IEP goals sooner than they had expected.
- The language skills of 8 students' with severe communication disabilities were tracked using standardized assessment tools. These students showed marked improvements in communication/language skills over the course of their year in the "smart classrooms", and their growth in skills was greater in that year compared to growth over previous years.
- Teachers reported that diagnostic and "on the spot" assessments were easier and helped to inform their lesson planning (i.e., precision teaching was enabled).

How long does it take to master Smart Inclusion? Learning is a process with no fixed time frame. We start with what we know and incorporate new experiences, knowledge, and practices in small increments. We often do this best by working collaboratively in a community of learners, assisting each other in setting small, manageable learning goals, guided by a common vision.

What is the vision? At UCDSB it is about "Creating futures, leading, and learning for all." Smart Inclusion's "Why?" is *To increase participation, and achievement for all students including those with significant disabilities; to position ALL students to take advantage of emerging educational technologies in inclusive learning environments.* And ultimately all of that guides our work in reaching out to the UCDSB goal of 90% Graduation Rate, 100% successful pathways for all, by 2020.

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